

**STAFF MEETING MINUTES
COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2002
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING - ROOM 113
2:30 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Bob Workman, Chair
Bernie Heier, Vice Chair
Kathy Campbell
Larry Hudkins
Ray Stevens

Others Present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer
Gwen Thorpe, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Diane Staab, Deputy County Attorney
Bruce Medcalf, County Clerk
Trish Owen, Chief Deputy County Clerk
Melissa Koci, County Clerk's Office

The Staff Meeting was called to order at 2:35 p.m.

1 APPROVAL OF STAFF MEETING MINUTES OF THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2002

MOTION: Hudkins moved and Campbell seconded approval of the Staff Meeting minutes. Heier, Workman, Stevens, Campbell and Hudkins voted aye. Motion carried.

2 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

A. Convention and Visitors Bureau RFP Committee

MOTION: Heier moved and Stevens seconded the additions to the agenda. Hudkins, Heier, Workman, Stevens and Campbell voted aye. Motion carried.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

A. Convention and Visitors Bureau RFP

Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer, distributed documentation regarding the Convention and Visitors Bureau RFP and CVB Committee Member conflict (Exhibit A). He indicated the committee met on Friday, August 16th to discuss the two proposals for taking over the administration of the Convention and Visitors Bureau. He said Jack Mills had agreed to serve on the committee, but has not been able to attend any of the meetings. Eagan noted interviews for the Convention and Visitors Bureau Director position are going to be held on August 28, 2002 and he suggested the Committee move on without Jack Mills.

Hudkins reported he suggested Jack Mills be on the Committee, but with the conflicts that have arisen and lack of participation, he should be removed. Hudkins said maybe a letter should be sent to him thanking him for his participation, but the Committee needs to move forward.

Stevens suggested not taking Mills off of the Committee just because he was not able to attend the meetings.

Eagan said it wouldn't be fair to have Mills continue on the Committee since he wasn't part of the original discussion and will not be able to attend the interviews. He suggested the letter say thanks for agreeing to serve, we understand that other time commitments conflicted, but the County needs to move forward.

MOTION: Hudkins moved and Heier seconded to direct Kerry Eagan to draw up a letter to Jack Mills thanking him for his service, but due to scheduling conflicts the Committee must move forward. Heier, Hudkins, Campbell and Workman voted aye. Stevens voted no. Motion carried.

3 A. BUDGET WORK SESSION

1. Reduction in Force Policy - Diane Staab, Deputy County Attorney

Diane Staab, Deputy County Attorney, appeared and indicated the Reduction in Force Policy is for Unrepresented Classified employees and she has been receiving some questions from Elected Officials and Department Heads about the procedure. Staab said the resolution was adopted pursuant to the Personnel Rules that apply to all Classified employees. Staab said the question is whether it should be changed or an amendment should be added to allow all Department Heads and Elected Officials to consider performance as well as seniority when considering a reduction in employees through layoff. Staab said seniority was the only thing currently considered because it was more objective and was patterned after the contracts with other Unions, which are based on seniority.

Campbell asked Georgia Glass about the performance issue and asked for some background on it.

Georgia Glass, Personnel Director, appeared and indicated she has only dealt with reduction in force with the City and only this year. Glass said for the City's management class and the LCEA, Personnel factors in performance which is based on the previous 3 years evaluations and an average of their score. Glass said in the job class that is being eliminated, the employee is ranked first on performance and then seniority.

Staab said everyone in the County has the same type of performance evaluation, including supervisors. She said if the Board wanted a change in the resolution, it would have to be scheduled soon for a Tuesday meeting.

Campbell asked if it would be optional for each office if they wanted to go by seniority or performance, or just performance or just seniority.

Gary Lacey, County Attorney, appeared and asked if there are bumping rights within each department and if so, are they interdepartmental.

Staab said there are bumping rights now, but the resolution in place is based strictly on seniority, so the question is whether or not performance should be considered.

Stevens asked if the policy of reduction in force apply to both Department Heads, who are controlled by the Board of Commissioners, and Elected Officials.

Staab said yes.

The Board agreed they would think about adding the performance issue to the resolution and get back with Staab as soon as possible.

2. Budget Freeze Update

Eagan indicated the County Assessor is asking the Board's permission for ten of his employees to attend some upcoming training in the amount of \$400 and for Bob Stanley to attend an educational course in the amount of \$180.

MOTION: Campbell moved and Hudkins seconded approval of the requests from the County Assessor. Heier, Hudkins, Campbell, Stevens and Workman voted aye. Motion carried.

Eagan reported Sue Eckley, Safety & Training Officer, is requesting \$65 to attend a workshop at Mahoney State Park, which will be taken out of the Worker's Compensation fund. He said the workshop will also include information regarding HIPPA and suggested Gwen Thorpe, Chief Deputy Administrative Officer, should decide whether she wants to attend the meeting also.

MOTION: Hudkins moved and Heier seconded to approve the request for both Gwen and Sue to attend the meeting with the choice being Gwen's if she chooses not to go. Heier, Hudkins, Workman and Stevens voted aye. Campbell voted no. Motion carried.

Eagan received a request from Don Thomas for one of his staff to attend a conference in Denver regarding ice control (Exhibit B).

Don Thomas, County Engineer, appeared and indicated he would like one of his employees to attend a snow conference in Denver because the County is considering changing the chemicals for ice control. He said the conference is \$190 for 3 days and the cheapest way of traveling is out of Omaha by plane, which is \$250.

Campbell asked how often the County Engineer sends someone to this type of conference.

Thomas said it is put on annually but his employee has never gone before.

Campbell asked if the money can be taken out of a non-property tax fund.

Thomas said it could, but he didn't believe he had the line items for it.

Campbell said if he absolutely needs the training and it will save the County money, it would be easier if it came out of another fund rather than the highway fund.

Thomas said a line item may have to be created for that.

Kroeker said Thomas can take the amount out of any line item like meals and lodging, as long as he doesn't go over the total appropriations.

MOTION: Campbell moved and Heier seconded to authorize the request and ask the County Engineer to take the money out of a non-property tax fund. Campbell, Hudkins, Workman, Heier and Stevens voted aye. Motion carried.

Eagan also noted the County Clerk's office received a treated lumber purchase from the County Engineer, which is a capital purchase.

Thomas said it is for a new bridge deck.

MOTION: Heier moved and Hudkins seconded to approve \$2,238.90 for the new bridge deck for the County Engineer. Stevens, Hudkins, Workman, Campbell and Heier voted aye. Motion carried.

Eagan reported the Sheriff purchased a Pentax Pocket Jet II Printer which will be taken out of the Grant Fund, so it wouldn't be a property tax purchase.

MOTION: Heier moved and Hudkins seconded to approve the Pentax Pocket Jet II printer for the County Sheriff and take it out of the non-property tax fund. Campbell, Hudkins, Workman, Stevens and Heier voted aye. Motion carried.

Eagan also noted Lacey visited with Eagan on Friday and requested attendance at a conference that he will fund out of the Drug Forfeiture Funds. Lacey told Eagan the money needed to be in on Friday, so Eagan told him to go ahead.

MOTION: Hudkins moved and Stevens seconded to ratify that decision. Stevens, Heier, Workman, Hudkins and Campbell voted aye. Motion carried.

Eagan said there will be a policy on Thursday's agenda for the Board to consider regarding training, seminars or items taken out of the Drug Forfeiture Fund. He said that way each department doesn't have to come back to the Board every time they need something approved.

3 BUDGET WORK SESSION

Dave Kroeker, Budget and Fiscal Officer, appeared and distributed documentation regarding a comparison for FY02 to FY03 as of August 20, 2002 (Exhibit C).

Kroeker said under the General Fund, there was a \$3.2 million increase in Personnel costs and with the reductions it is now at \$2.463 million. He noted the levy is 1.42 cents per \$100 value for \$1,857,592 and with regard to FTE's, the General Fund is below last year by 2 FTE's.

Workman noted if the County does not want any tax increase at all, the County would have to find \$1.8 million. His suggestion was to give the Unrepresented and Management employees a 3% cost of living raise and do away with the Post Employment Health Program for one year, which would save \$550,000. He said \$1.3 million is a one-cent increase for taxpayers, which is \$10 for every \$100,000 house. Workman said the problem could be solved right now with the Board going with that option.

Hudkins asked Glass if she has spoken with the Union recently regarding budget negotiations.

Glass indicated she spoke with them once, nothing came out of the conversation and the Union has not had any follow-up meetings with the County.

Campbell agreed with the penny increase but suggested giving the employees a 4% increase, do away with the PEHP for a year and find the rest of the money somewhere else instead of taking it all away from the Unrepresented employees.

Heier said he agrees with Workman's idea and Campbell's suggestion, since the Union is not willing to give up PEHP. Heier indicated he would vote for the one cent increase and the lower cost of living raise for the employees, just to save cuts.

Workman indicated he did not agree with the one-cent increase, but after talking with the Department Heads and Elected Officials he changed his mind. Workman said if there is a reduction in force, the County will be eliminating several good services and people and it may be hard for the County to recover. He didn't believe 5% would be appropriate considering the budget crunch the County is in today.

Campbell said her proposal isn't that the employees get a 5% increase, but if the Unrepresented employees shouldered half of the amount the other \$225,000 could come from another source like Keno. Campbell said she would rather look at it that way, rather than the Unrepresented paying the price for the County's loss.

Stevens indicated he is in favor of eliminating the PEHP plan, and in favor of reducing any wage increase to only 3% for the next year, however, he is not in favor of the one-cent increase to the taxpayers. He preferred the taxpayers only get a ½ cent increase to the property tax and the \$600,000 the County is short should come out of Personnel costs by reduction in employment if needed. Stevens said he considers it the responsibility of the Union because the Board gave them a very low cost option of helping the Board solve the problem and the Union chose not to do it so he would be willing to reduce salaries by eliminating 15 to 20 people.

B. POTENTIAL LITIGATION - Diane Staab, Deputy County Attorney

MOTION: Campbell moved and Heier seconded to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing labor negotiations at 3:33 p.m. Campbell, Workman, Heier, Hudkins and Stevens voted aye. Motion carried.

MOTION: Hudkins moved and Heier seconded to exit Executive Session at 4:29 p.m. Campbell, Hudkins, Workman, Heier and Stevens voted aye. Motion carried.

Campbell noted she would like to spend some time thinking about the different plans and ask that the Board make final decisions at the Thursday staff meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Campbell moved and Hudkins seconded to adjourn the staff meeting at 4:32 p.m. Stevens, Workman, Heier, Hudkins and Campbell voted aye. Motion carried.

Bruce Medcalf
Lancaster County Clerk